PLSC 450: Research Seminar: Abuse of Power in Politics
Department of Political Science, Brigham Young University
Fall 2017

Instructor Information
Professor Celeste Beesley
Phone: 801-422-7807
Email: celeste_beesley@byu.edu
Office: 730 SWKT

Office Hours: 1:20-3:20 pm Thursday, 9-10am Friday & by appointment
Class Locations: SWKT 793
Class Times: MW 10:30-11:45pm

Course Overview and Objectives
This course is a research and writing course. In this course, you will complete an original article-length research project. You will need to employ skills you gained in previous political science courses to select an appropriate research question; design a research project; locate materials to help you in your research; write and revise multiple drafts; and use appropriate evidence to make your case. You will work with your classmates to give and receive appropriate feedback on your work at various stages of development as well as receiving guidance from the professor. You will also present your findings in a high-quality oral presentation. This course is an opportunity for you to choose a topic that you find interesting and important and learn and teach others something new about it. Though you are not required to do quantitative analysis in this class and many questions are best answered through other methods, it is inappropriate to avoid quantitative analysis when that would be the best or one of the better methods of answering your research question. You need to be able to identify and evaluate different research methods, sources, and data, and properly cite your sources. This course meets the General Education requirement for advanced writing and oral communication.

This course focuses on the abuse of power in politics. Governments must have power in order to govern. Many discussions of political institutions debate how best to limit the powers of government, but experience has sadly shown that governments are often able to exercise power in ways that are outside of the legitimate scope of government; make use of that power for personal gain of politicians; or abuse the basic rights of some of the state’s subjects. This course examines some of the ways that governments (and the people in them) can and do use their powers in ways that those they govern may not choose. We begin with relatively small abuses of office and move on to abuses involving the lives and freedoms of the governed.

The Political Science Department Learning Outcomes lay out the following objectives:

1. Demonstrate advanced understanding of the discipline of political science, including familiarity with each of the four major subfields: American politics, comparative politics, international relations, and political philosophy.
2. Think critically and analytically about government, political processes, and political theories, including the components of a good society.

3. Use rigorous methods of research design and analysis to answer political questions, including multiple research methodologies.

4. Write and speak with originality and clarity, providing reasons and evidence to support claims using proper citation of source material.

5. Collaborate effectively with others, including participation in political processes and engagement on issues of political importance.

The readings for this course include professional political science analyses in the fields of American and comparative politics as well as several texts in political philosophy. Class discussions and the process of crafting and refining your research question promote critical and analytical thinking about the difficulty of designing good government and how political processes can be changed to address abuse of power in government. The process of writing the research paper will require you to effectively utilize design and analysis. The paper itself (in all its stages of writing and revision), your comments on other students’ drafts and, your oral presentation require you to hone your ability to clearly convey your ideas. In addition, the process of writing the research paper is guided to enable you to “develop productive individual and collaborative writing processes, including pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing and proofreading.” (GE Advanced Writing Learning Outcomes)

**Assignments and Grading**

This course does not include either tests or quizzes. The readings and class discussions will be helpful for your research, but it is possible that your chosen research topic will not directly relate to the topics in the course readings. However, they will be beneficial for you because they give you a broad understanding of the issues of abusing and preventing the abuse of power that you would miss if you concentrated only on the narrow topic of your research paper. They will be useful to you as you define and think through conceptual issues that are important in designing your research and framing your questions.

The assignments for this course are as follows:

1) **Brief Research Proposal:** Submit a typed one-page explanation of the topic related to the course you are interested in researching for your paper and why. Due Sept 29, 3%

2) **Annotated Bibliography:** For this assignment, you will need to identify 20 or more pieces of academic writing (journals articles, books, working papers, government policy papers, etc. You may use news articles from high quality newspapers if your topic is very current, but these cannot make up more than 5 of your twenty sources. You are welcome to use more than 5, but you must still have at least 15 academic sources.) An annotated bibliography is not simply a list of citations. The annotation is at least one paragraph and includes a summary, assessment, and reflection of how/why this piece informs your research. You also need to organize the literature thematically according to what bodies of literature it address. You will receive further instructions in class. For some
preliminary guidance, check out https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/01/. Due Oct 11. 5%

3) Research Proposal: This should follow the instruction you received on qualitative or quantitative research designs in PL SC 200. You must address your research question, provide a relevant and analytical literature review, discuss how your research will contribute to the existing literature, identify your data sources, and describe how you will analyze them. You will receive further instructions in class. Due Oct 25. 10%

4) Peer Review of the Research Proposal: You will make extensive marginal comments and detailed comments on the proposal. Include both praise and criticism as appropriate. You may correct grammar, but your focus should be on the style of writing and the content of the proposal. Is it clear what question they want to answer and how they propose to answer it? Does the method they have selected for presenting empirical evidence seem appropriate for the topic? Do you think it is convincing? Are there alternative hypotheses they should be considering? Do they need more carefully to define a concept? Peer reviews that are too brief, ignore either ideas or writing style, or are incorrect, confusing or offensive will not be evaluated highly for this assignment. Apply the golden rule here—be as helpful to the author as you want your reviewers to be to you. Due Oct 30. 2%

5) Draft of Paper: Notice this does not say “rough draft” or “first draft.” Revision is an essential part of good writing. For this assignment, I expect a complete and relatively polished draft so that I can provide useful feedback. Due Nov 22nd. 15%

6) Peer Review of Draft Paper: The standards for this review are the same as those listed above for the peer review of the research proposal. Due Nov 30th. 5%

7) Oral Presentation: Each student will give a presentation in class. The presentation must be polished, concise, and targeted to a general audience. Pay close attention to “organizing the main points of your topic coherently and supporting them with adequate detail, and delivering a message effectively using appropriate…visual aids” (GE Advanced Writing Learning Outcomes). Your classmates will then have 5 minutes to ask you questions. You will be graded on standards posted on Learning Suite and your response to questions that follow your presentation. Dec 6, 11, and 13 in class (sign-ups will occur Nov 15th in class). 3%

8) Poster Presentation: The department is holding a research poster conference (tentatively scheduled for the afternoon of December 13th). You will need to prepare a poster 1-2 weeks before for submission and printing. There will be prized for the best posters. This is an effective way to be able to very concisely present your questions and findings. 2%

9) Final Paper: This should be an improved and revised version of your Draft Paper. Final papers that do not address issues raised by peers or the professor in the draft will be penalized. Due Dec. 18th by 1:30pm (uploaded to Learning Suite). 45%

10) Class participation: For every class, I ask that each student prepare at least one discussion question for one of the assigned readings on abuse of power. This is not a factual question about information in the text, but rather a question about how the article or chapter applies to other things we studied, broader moral questions, specific cases of politics, etc. Additionally, at least one student will be called on to lead discussion of the readings assigned for that class. That student must ready to summarize and to analyze each reading. When summarizing readings in class keep in mind that you are presenting the basis for the class discussion, you’re not responsible for teaching the whole reading.
o Don’t give details of the readings. Everyone else has read the article too.
o State the major point and briefly summarize the reading in a few sentences.
o Present two major arguments found in the reading.
o Explain why this reading is significant, given what we have learned to date.
o Field questions and comments by your classmates.

Even when you are not leading the presentation, you are expected to answer questions or make substantive comments every class period. Sometimes we will use in-class writing assignments. I keep track of comments and participation. If you miss class, come late, or your comments do not meet expectations, my evaluation of your participation will be negatively affected. 10%

Final letter grades will be assigned using the following scale: A (94-100), A- (90-93.99), B+ (87-89.99), B (83-86.99), B- (80-82.99), C+ (77-79.99), C (73-76.99), C- (70-72.99), D+ (67-69.99), D (65-67), D- (60-64), and F (59 and below).

If you have reason to believe that a grading error has been made, you may submit a detailed argument in writing, outlining why you believe your grade to be in error; a clean copy of the assignment you originally submitted; and the returned copy of the assignment (with notes and the original grade). You must submit these within 10 days of receiving your grade-- after that, I will assume you have accepted the grade assigned.

Civility
Please mind your manners in class. This means that you should arrive promptly, avoid surfing the internet or reading newspapers during class, avoid packing up bags prior to the end of class, and refrain from talking/texting on cell phones during class. It also means that you will be civil in all discussions. Each class member should feel free to express an opinion. Lively debate is intellectually stimulating and healthy. Demeaning another class member or making derogatory generalizations about any group of people are unacceptable behaviors.

Academic Integrity
While all students sign the honor code, there are still specific skills most students need to master over time in order to correctly cite sources, especially in this new age of the internet; as well as deal with the stress and strain of college life without resorting to cheating. Please know that as your professor I will notice instances of cheating on exams or plagiarizing on papers. General information about the honor code can be found at honorcode.byu.edu. Details about Academic Honesty are found at http://saas.byu.edu/catalog/2010-2011ucat/GeneralInfo/HonorCode.php.

Writing submitted for credit at BYU must consist of the student's own ideas presented in sentences and paragraphs of his or her own construction. The work of other writers or speakers may be included when appropriate (as in a research paper or book review), but such material must support the student's own work (not substitute for it) and must be clearly identified by appropriate introduction and punctuation and by footnoting or other standard referencing.

The substitution of another person's work for the student's own or the inclusion of another person's work without adequate acknowledgment (whether done intentionally or not) is known as plagiarism. It is a violation of academic, ethical, and legal standards and can result in a failing
grade not only for the paper but also for the course in which the paper is written. In extreme cases, it can justify expulsion from the University. Because of the seriousness of the possible consequences, students who wonder if their papers are within these guidelines should visit the Writing Lab or consult a faculty member who specializes in the teaching of writing or who specializes in the subject discussed in the paper. Useful books to consult on the topic include the current Harbrace College Handbook, the MLA Handbook, and James D. Lester's Writing Research Papers.

**Discrimination**
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education. Title IX covers discrimination in programs, admissions, activities, and student-to-student sexual harassment. BYU’s policy against sexual harassment extends not only to employees of the university but to students as well. If you encounter unlawful sexual harassment or gender based discrimination, please talk to your professor; contact the Equal Employment Opportunities Office at 422-5895 or 367-5689 (24-hours); or contact the Honor Code Office at 422-2847.

**Access**
Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere which reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the University Accessibility Center (422-2767). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the UAC office. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures. You should contact the Equal Employment Opportunity Office at 422-5895, D-282 ASB.

**University Resources**
Many students at BYU struggle with stress, depression, and other emotional challenges. BYU’s office of Counseling and Psychological Services offers a variety of helpful services to deal with these very common issues. Counseling is available to full-time students with concerns such as anxiety, depression, eating disorders, interpersonal conflict, marital problems, self-esteem, social relationships, and stress management. All of these services, consistent with the highest standards of professional psychology, are provided in a confidential manner. For example, the university’s Stress Management Services can help students identify sources of stress and learn how to cope with its physical and emotional effects. Students learn how to relax, restructure stressful thinking, and become more effective in dealing with stress and pressure. Counseling and Psychological Services is located at 1500 WSC and by phone at 801-422-3035. Visit their website at [https://caps.byu.edu/](https://caps.byu.edu/) for more information or to make an appointment.

**Readings**
These books are the main texts of the course:
Links to other readings are available on the course Learning Suite site in the “Contents” tab.

**Introduction: Power and Politics**

September 6: Course Orientation, Expectations, Research, Introduction to Abuse of Power.

September 11: What is Power?

September 13: Where is the line between use of power and abuse of power? What are legitimate vs. illegitimate uses of state power? Where does government legitimacy come from?
- John Locke, “Second Treatise on Government” Chapters 8 and 9, pp. 61-75
- Mosiah 29
- D&C 121:39
- D&C 134

Sept. 18:
- D.R. Rowland, “Reviewing the Literature: A Short Guide for Research Students” (Learning Suite)

**Abuse of Office: Corruption**

Sept. 20: Causes of Corruption:
- Triesman, “What have we learned about the causes of corruption from 10 year of cross-national empirical research?” *Annual Review of Political Science* 2007.

Sept 25: Costs of Corruption:
- Read either: Bowler and Karp, “Politicians, Scandals and Trust in Government” *Political Behavior* 2004 OR Anderson and Tverdova “Corruption, Political Allegiances and Attitudes Toward Government in Contemporary Democracies. *American Journal of Political Science* 2003 (The former is about American politics; the latter is comparative politics. Choose according to your interests)

Sept 27: Controlling Corruption:
• Susan Rose-Ackerman, “The economics of corruption” *Journal of Public Economics* 1975

Brief Research Proposal Due September 29 (Friday). Upload to Learning Suite.

Oct. 2: Visiting Expert
Challenges with controlling corruption:
• Anduiza, Gallego and Munoz, “Turning a Blind Eye: Experimental Evidence of Partisan Bias in Attitudes toward Corruption” *Comparative Political Studies* 2013.
• Chong, et. al., “Does Corruption Information Inspire the fight or quash the hope?” *Journal of Politics* 2015.

Oct. 4: Challenges with controlling corruption:
• Transparency International, “Global Corruption Report” 2004. Read the section on “Legal Hurdles” pp. 89-109 (link will be available on learning suite)
• Jensen and Malesky “Does the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention Reduce Bribery?” *International Organization* 2017

Limitations on Voice
Oct 9:

Oct 11:

Annotated Bibliography due October 11

Oct 16:
• Peter Argersinger, “New Perspectives on Election Fraud in the Gilded Age” Political Science Quarterly 1986
Oct 18:

- Susan Hyde, “The Observer Effect” *World Politics* 2007

Oct 23: No Class. Individual research meetings with Professor Beesley

**Abuse of the Governed**


- “A foreigner in her own home” *The Economist* March 10, 2011.

Research Proposal Due

Oct 30: Gaventa chs. 1-3
Peer Review of Research Proposal Due.

Nov 1: Gaventa, chs. 4, 6, 10


- Maud S. Beelman “The Dangers of Disinformation in the war on Terrorism” Neiman Reports

Nov 8: Arendt, “The Totalitarian Movement”

Nov 13: Arendt, “Totalitarianism in Power”

Nov 15: Arendt, “Ideology and Terror”


Nov 20: Demick, Chapters 1-9
Nov 27: Demick, Chs 10-14- Epilogue

**What Is to be Done?**

Nov 29:


Draft Due
Dec. 4:
- Henry David Thoreau, “Civil Disobedience Part 1” 1849
- Article of Faith 12

Peer Review of Draft Due

Dec 6: Oral Presentations
Dec 11: Oral Presentations
Dec 13: Oral Presentations

Tenative date for the Political Science Department research poster Conference.

Final Paper Due December 15th.